Publications Committee

University of Texas Bulletin

No. 1767: December 1, 1917

The English Bulletin

Number 4: December, 1917

Published six times a month and entered as second-class matter
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The benefits of education and of useful knowledge, generally diffused through a community, are essential to the preservation of a free government.

Sam Houston

Cultivated mind is the guardian genius of democracy. . . . It is the only dictator that freemen acknowledge and the only security that freemen desire.

Mirabeau B. Lamar

The English Bulletin

Number 4: December, 1917

Editors: KILLIS CAMPBELL
E. M. CLARK
L. W. PAYNE, JR.

The English Bulletin is intended as an organ for the expression of opinion by teachers of English in Texas concerning pedagogical and other problems that arise in their work. It will appear from one to three times a year.

Copies of this bulletin will be sent free, on application, to any teacher of English in Texas. Address **The English Bulletin**, the University of Texas, Austin, Texas.

CONTENTS

ENGLISH TEACHING IN TEXAS*

By Robert Adger Law, Ph. D., Associate Professor of English, The University of Texas

I have requested of the chairman time to make a preliminary report of the committee appointed two years ago to investigate conditions of English teaching in Texas. However, as a matter of fact, I have no report to present, but merely a preliminary statement based on replies to a questionnaire received from one hundred and fifty Texas schools and academies. These replies have not yet been fully collated and digested, nor have they been submitted to other members of the committee besides the chairman. Consequently the committee as a whole has not passed on even a preliminary report and should not be held responsible for the statements of fact that I am about to make. If this association sees fit to let the committee continue work for one year more, I should hope that it might submit a formal report in 1918, and also make recommendations at that time for the betterment of English teaching.

The committee is composed of Miss Emma C. King of Baylor Female College, Mrs. Mamie Doak and Miss Nina C. Hill of Austin, Dr. Constance Pessels of San Antonio, Mr. L. H. Rather of Bonham, Professor Gates Thomas of Southwest Texas Normal College, and myself. Before the last meeting we agreed on the form of a questionnaire, which we, last February, submitted to about five hundred English teachers throughout the State, enclosing a stamped envelope with each letter for reply. About one hundred and ninety teachers, representing one hundred and fifty schools and academies, have sent in replies. No second requests have yet gone out, but if the association so orders, we can make another effort to procure information from such high schools as Brownwood, Cameron, El Paso,† and Greenville, which did not respond the first time. Probably the list of such schools would not be long, and the expense, even at the present rate

*Read before the English Section of the Texas State Teachers' Association at Waco, November 29, 1917.

†A reply from El Paso has been received since this was written.

of postage, would not be large. So far the expense of printing the questionnaires and furnishing stationery has been borne by the School of English of the University of Texas, and the clerical work of sending out and checking the questionnaires has been performed by student assistants in the same school. Thus of the expenses of the investigation the sole item to be borne by this body was the postage, which was met by individual contributions. There is now on hand the sum of seven dollars and a half, so that if the investigation be completed in the manner suggested, no second call for contributions need be issued at this time.

So much for the plan of the committee and its general results; now for specific results. One or more teachers from the following schools have reported to us: High Schools—Alpine, Amarillo, Archer City, Arlington, Austin High, Allen Junior High of Austin, Texas School for the Blind, Austin, Ballinger, Bartlett, Beaumont, Bellevue, Belleville, Belton, Bishop, Bonham, Brackettville, Brady, Bryan, Buda, Calvert, Canadian, Carrizo Springs, Center, Childress, Clarendon, Cleburne, Coleman, Comanche, Conroe, Corpus Christi, Corsicana, Crockett, Bryan Street High of Dallas, Forest Avenue High of Dallas, Oak Cliff High of Dallas, Decatur, De Leon, Del Rio, Denton, Dublin, El Campo, Ennis, Ferris, Floresville, Fort Worth, North Fort Worth, Fredericksburg, Gainesville, Galveston, Garland, Gilmer, Gonzales, Grandview, Granger, Hallettsville, Hillsboro, Hondo, Central High of Houston, South Junior High of Houston, Hubbard, Kaufman, Kingsville, Kyle, Laredo, Lockney, Longview, Lubbock, Lufkin, Mansfield, Marfa, Marshall, Mart, Miami, Midlothian, Milford, Mission, Moody, Mt. Calm, Mt. Enterprise, McKinney, New Braunfels, Nocona, Orange, Palacios, Palestine, Paris, Pilot Point, Pittsburg, Plano, Port Arthur, Post, Quanah, Reagan, Richmond, Rockport, Rogers, Rosebud, Round Top, Royse City, Rule, Sabinal, San Angelo, Brackenridge High of San Antonio, Main Avenue High of San Antonio, San Augustine, San Benito, San Marcos, Santa Anna, Seguin, Seymour, Sherman, Sinton, Smithville, Snyder, Somerville, Sulphur Springs, Sweetwater, Taylor, Teague, Temple, Terrell, Texarkana, Trinity, Tulia, Tyler, Victoria, Waco, Wills Point, Wolfe City, Wortham, Yoakum; Colleges and Academies: Abilene

Christian College, Saint Mary's Academy of Austin, East Texas Normal College of Commerce, Hardin School and Powell School of Dallas, Texas Woman's College of Fort Worth, Port Arthur Academy, San Antonio, San Marcos Baptist Academy, and Weatherford College; Grammar School: Austin School of Fort Worth. Altogether, there are, I believe, 139 public high schools, 10 private schools or academies, and one grammar school. The list as a whole is representative, I think, of the better Texas high schools, and is certainly representative in its geography. All the replies bear evidence on their face of careful filling out and of interest in the general subject. The information they give may, therefore, be deemed reliable.

First as to the training, experience, salaries, and work demanded of the teachers. The evidence on this point is clear, and in my opinion, distinctly encouraging. Whatever may have been true even ten years ago, English is not now held in contempt as a subject for teaching by school administrators of Texas. While exact figures are not now available, a large proportion of English teachers in the schools mentioned are graduates of Texas, Baylor, Southwestern, Trinity, Rice, Texas Christian University, Chicago, Peabody, Yale, and the various State normal colleges. Many have had ten, fifteen, or even twenty-five years' experience in teaching. Salaries range from five hundred to fifteen or sixteen hundred dollars a year, and the factors determining these salaries are not hard to discover. More than one woman who replied stated that her salary was not equal to that of men who did similar work in that school, but at least in the larger cities women seem to be about as well paid as men. Apparently a thousand dollars is a common salary for men teaching in the smaller towns, but in most cases the salary is paid to them as principals, rather than as English teachers. Heads of English departments in the largest schools are paid about fifteen hundred dollars, but an average salary of those who replied seems to be seven hundred and fifty dollars, or thereabouts. Many of these teachers give their entire attention to English, and properly so, but most of them teach one or two other subjects as well. Most frequent combinations are history or Latin with English, but no subject in the school curriculum—physics, biology, music, mathematics, domestic economy—seems to be

considered remote in its connection with the mother tongue. Another regrettable fact is the number of pupils taught even in the best organized schools. One would suppose that no teacher of English could well teach more than eighty pupils at a time, but Texas teachers were last year given 110, 112, 124, 140, 150, 168, and even 180 pupils at one time, and, as a rule, were expected to teach them literature, composition, and grammar. On this point the association might well utter a strong protest in the interest of those we are attempting to teach. To my mind this is the most discouraging feature of the present situation.

Literature is taught in all the schools mentioned, I believe, though it is taught apparently by various methods. By general agreement stress is laid upon study of the classics, by which term we usually mean books listed among the college entrance requirements. From forty to sixty per cent of the time devoted to English seems to be given to the classics. But some schools give the major part of their time to the history of literature; some even sixty or seventy-five per cent. Classics in general cost more money than text-books on the history of literature; and if a complete survey of the poorer schools of Texas could be made, one would probably discover a much greater tendency to exalt the history and depreciate the literature itself. The average school reporting gives twenty to forty per cent of its time to studying the history. Most schools also require parallel reading by the students, and in the larger schools, this reading is well planned and apparently well executed. Not a few schools have their pupils read eight or ten books outside the class each year. But this work is dependent to a large degree on the size of the school library, and many schools report only two hundred volumes in their libraries, with only half this number purchased especially for the English work. Indeed, some schools in comparatively large Texas towns possess no library at all. Practically all the teachers devote more or less time to reading aloud to their classes and also require students to read aloud.

Concerning grammar distinct difference of opinion has developed in Texas, as elsewhere, about the value of formal grammar to the high-school pupil, and many schools have no place for it in their curricula. However, most of the schools give it

a distinct place, and some teach it during a portion of each one of the four high-school years. The usual time of teaching it is the first year, with a final review during the fourth year in not a few schools. Concerning the device of diagramming sentences, reports show the teachers almost equally divided, with six or seven decidedly non-committal. The tendency is definitely toward the application of grammatical principles to composition, and towards its incidental rather than formal presentation.

The teaching of composition is the heaviest burden upon the shoulders of the English teacher, and likewise the most important. Most teachers seem to require weekly compositions of one and a half to three pages from all their pupils. These papers are duly corrected and returned, and in most cases, apparently, corrected in turn by the pupil. Personal conferences are held by many of the teachers with more or less regularity, some using study-hall periods for this purpose. But the great difficulty again is the number of pupils assigned to each teacher, and one cannot blame the teacher who spends ten hours a week correcting papers for not spending more. In this writer's opinion many teachers make the mistake of basing too many papers on the classics which are studied in class. It is not uncommon for forty or fifty per cent of the papers to be so designated. Ten per cent in my humble judgment is nearer what should be the normal. A frequent and just complaint is that other teachers do not take account of the English used by pupils in their departments. But generally speaking, I believe, composition is more sensibly and more effectively taught in Texas than was the case ten years ago.

The term "oral English" is not yet well understood or agreed upon. Concerning this subject the answers are rather vague, in consequence. Many teachers believe they have obtained valuable results by insisting on correct speech in the class-room, by debates, by reading aloud, or even by a city-wide campaign for better speech.

Finally, as to the aims of English teaching, the answers are most interesting. They may be divided generally between those who stress practical and those who stress cultural values. A few of these answers may well close this informal paper:

"I think that students should be taught to read, write, and speak with intelligence and earnestness.' I believe that these

things are so practical that they are indispensable. I believe that a good foundation for college work is of value even to those who never go to college. In my opinion a good high school ought to prepare the student for a good university."

"To give the pupil a thorough knowledge of English—both spoken and written—in such a way that he will be able to put the knowledge to practical use."

"The chief aims in the teaching of English should be an appreciation of good literature, and correct speaking and writing: in fact, cultural value should be placed first, in my opinion."

"If correct written and spoken English, and an appreciation of good literature are attained, all of the aims mentioned will be cared for."

"Correct speaking, correct writing, and the ability to read and enjoy the English language."

"Most important, to read with understanding and an appetite. Next important, to be able to speak and write with some grace and more precision."

"The student today needs more practical common sense than any other one thing. My aim is to make them secure that."

"Correct expression, spoken and written. In reading we can do little more than direct our students along the channel of the best books."

(From a graduate of The University of Paris, with twenty-five years' experience:) "Being connected with a private school, I get boys from all over the State, and this enables me to get a pretty fair idea of how English is being taught in different schools. In my opinion the essentials of English are not insisted upon sufficiently in the grammar grades and first-year high. Furthermore, I believe that a formal study of the essentials of grammar and forms of composition ought to be undertaken again in the third or fourth year of high school English, for the simple reason that the mind is then sufficiently developed to understand what was heretofore learned mechanically. For this reason I introduced Genung's *Outlines of Rhetoric* in my classes. Our aim ought to be this: teach the young to spell correctly, to distinguish between a sentence and a phrase; drill them in paragraph structure; and show them that words high sounding and of lofty pretensions are not essentially good English."

SOME SUGGESTIONS CONCERNING THE TEACHING OF ENGLISH COMPOSITION*

By O. D. Wannamaker, M. A., Professor of English, Southern Methodist University

I fancy teachers of manual training are able to keep their pupils busy for some time in the acquisition of pure technique. There is a satisfaction in drawing, with the sure aid of the square, an unswerving line of black at right angles across a clean, smooth plank, a straight path for the teeth of the saw. There is a thrill in the cut of the sharp saw through the firm but pleasant grain of the well-cured pine, the teeth eating up the thin black line as they cut, and never blundering to the right or the left. There is almost a joy in the firm, inward-driving impact of the hammer on the nail. A boy's nerves are not likely to grow jaded, nor his interest to lag, while he learns by repeated attempts the elements of technique in the art of making things out of wood. Moreover, when the first tasks in the actual making of things are assigned, attention may be constantly required by the teacher to the elements of technique.

It is scarcely the same with the art of making things out of words. To be sure, the boy is using a material instrument—pencil or pen—but the visible results of its use elicit no thrill; they are merely more or less ugly scrawling lines over the unoffending whiteness of sheets of paper. Indeed, I am in error in saying that the instrument one uses in composition is a material thing. The pencil and the pen are instruments with which one indites, with which one draws on paper the symbols that represent words; but the instruments with which one composes are merely these words themselves. The boy or girl who is required to practice the mere technique of composition is being asked to practice with invisible and intangible instruments the technique of a highly elevated and very subtle art: the art of so placing the sound symbols which represent ideas that these ideas shall be clear to another mind. The self-conscious practicing of the

*Read before the English Section of the Texas State Teachers' Association at Waco, November 29, 1917.

technique of this art is beyond the capacity of almost any boy or girl of high-school age or even of the freshman stage of development.

Is it, then, desirable that high-school boys and girls and freshmen in colleges should become fairly proficient in this art even though its practice in a self-conscious manner be still beyond their stage of mental development? It certainly is desirable if the art of composition means merely the art of addressing oneself clearly, agreeably, and forcibly to one's fellows. It is still more obviously desirable if we conceive the art of composition to be, in fact, the art of thinking completely and therefore thinking in words. For, if there is any one thing that education must do for the student and for the sake of society, it is to develop in him the power of thinking completely; and if there is any other thing almost equally essential, it is to develop in the student the power to address himself clearly, agreeably, and forcibly to his fellows. We must not abandon the subject of English composition because we realize the almost insuperable difficulties in the way of teaching this subject.

If the pendulum swings back from the extreme of technique, must it swing through the whole arc and touch the other extreme of merely assigning certain subjects in order that the student may write, with the expectation that in the act of writing he will learn how to write? Since pendulums are in the habit of doing that stupid sort of thing, let's not consent to be mere pendulums. Let us endeavor to be self-directing intelligences. Only let us settle for once and all this principle of instruction:— Because of the difference between the arts of making things out of wood and making things out of words, the teacher of English composition must dwell only briefly and at moments fitly chosen on the teaching of pure technique. He must not follow the instructor in manual training and demand proficiency in the mere weaving of words into the elementary members of composition—phrases, sentences, paragraphs. He must speedily set his pupil some task more tangible and appealing. The pupil in manual training demands sooner or later an actual box to make; the pupil in English composition must be given something actual to make from the very start.

I shall endeavor to make my position clearer a little later on. Meanwhile, may I be pardoned for referring once more to carpentry—that occupation has a strong financial attraction to many of us teachers while the training camps are being built—and will you consider for a moment whether the young aspirant after honors in arts and crafts should be advised to keep his eye on the hammer or on the head of the nail? Surely, you answer, let him grasp the hammer firmly, and with sufficient attention to technique to be certain that he is striking with the proper end, but then let him forget the hammer and fasten his eyes on the head of the nail. There is a subtle magnetism induced by the eye of the boy in the head of the nail, which will draw unerringly the steel butt of the hammer. A good batsman does not watch the bat. He watches the ball and keeps in mind a vacant space far out in the left field, and is scarcely conscious of the sort of motion he uses in wielding the bat. All this by way of analogy. The lad who drives the nail home without a slip does so because he sets his heart on that feat, not by reason of minute observation of arm or hammer. The batter who lands a home-run had in his heart an intense determination to smash the ball. He almost forgot the bat and the grip of his fingers on it. Give to the boy or girl an objective sufficiently attractive, inspire a sufficient interest in the attainment of this objective, and with the instruments of words the boy or girl will reach that objective just as with bat or hammer.

In other words, it is my conviction that the right choosing of words, the proper placing of phrases, the neat joinery of sentences, the efficient building of paragraphs should always be secondary in the teaching of composition to immature students. Proficiency in these elements of the art of composition is, of course, to be desired, but it is my conviction that this proficiency will come gradually through the student's own efforts provided he is sufficiently interested in actual tasks assigned him to be accomplished through the instrumentality of words, and provided the teacher in indicating to the pupil wherein he falls short of the achievement of his tasks will explain those causes of failure which lie in limited vocabulary, awkward phrasing, poor construction, faulty sequence.

May I endeavor to make clear what I mean by fixing the attention of the student on an interesting objective? No one will ever learn to write well unless he is interested in learning. Most pupils are not at all interested in the mere art of writing well. Hence the strategy of the teacher must consist in outflanking his pupil by attacking an interest in something else; the pupil's interest in telling about something that has a grip on his enthusiasm. Composition as taught in the schools is thus made real, not artificial. It is intimately related to actual life. The attention of the pupil is directed toward some actual problem in life and the clear presentation of this problem to another person. The skillful teacher will seek for subjects in which members of the class are vitally interested, upon which they can actually write something that will be interesting to the teacher. Boys who have competed in the growing of prize acres should write on the methods they employed. Girls who have canned tomatoes successfully should explain their process. The pupil should not write on the stale generalized topic "How Cotton Is Planted," but on the fresh, personal subject, "How I Planted My Prize Acre." The girl must not write merely on the method of canning tomatoes, but must tell how she herself had unusual success in canning. In other words, if the pupil is impressed with the thought that he is to convey actual information worth conveying, and forgets that what he is writing is called a *theme*, he will at least enjoy his task, and there is a fair probability that he will get a good grade. If the pupil has actually been interested in telling how he grew a prize acre of cotton, or got his hens to lay well, or made a kite that flew splendidly, or how she earned ten dollars putting up jelly, or canned fifty quarts of tomatoes and never lost a can, then the teacher in a personal interview can direct attention to imperfections with the assurance that the suggestions will be received attentively, and that they will bear some small amount of fruit in gradually improving technique. But in all this neither the term technique nor any other technical term need be mentioned.

I seem to have in mind only one of the forms of composition,—that is, exposition. But the same procedure will apply equally well, I think, to any of the forms.

This is the primary suggestion I venture to offer. The second suggestion, likewise, looks away from technique; and I shall then conclude with a third, this last dealing strictly with technical procedure.

I have urged that the teacher should focus the attention of the pupil on the actual task immediately before him. My second suggestion is that the teacher himself should think of his work as a modern and more practical substitute for the old-fashioned course in formal logic. The teacher should be far more concerned in developing in his pupils the power of incisive penetration into a subject of thought than in correctness or excellence in sentence-formation. No matter how enthusiastic the boy may be in telling how he designed and built a flying machine, he will not master without the aid of his teacher the problem of analyzing his subject, parting it into its several natural logical divisions, penetrating to the very kernel of the matter and setting this clearly before the reader. Processes of analysis and arrangement are fundamentally important. A little timely suggestion to the individual student and in due season to the class will open the eyes of the young writer to the fact that there are several possible ways in which his whole subject matter may be naturally divided, and that one of these ways offers important advantages. More valuable still are suggestions which show to the young mind that there is often some one element in the subject matter which constitutes a key to the whole thing, and that the firm grasp upon this element means a mastery of the entire problem. Composition thus taught should be reflected in all the work done by the pupil in school and in his every-day thinking out of school. Moreover, in writing in this manner the boy will constantly be driven to reflect more deeply than he had previously done on the subject matter, and even to search for information that he does not possess.

I think it is seldom desirable that the pupil should write on literary subjects. On such themes immature students cannot well possess first-hand information, and cannot well think independently. The student cannot really believe as he writes about the madness of Hamlet that he is telling the teacher or any one else something not already thoroughly known. There must be a vapid second-handedness about such themes.

Finally, in the matter of pure technique, I have but one suggestion that I think may possibly be sufficiently fresh to deserve your attention. It follows naturally upon the insistence with which I have urged that teachers of composition consider themselves teachers of the art of thinking. When the teacher has brought the student to understand the process of analyzing a subject of thought itself, he may take a further step and analyze for him the processes of explanation by which subjects of thought are made clear to a reader. These processes are two: the narrative method and the diagram or picture method. In the extreme of the narrative method, a canoe may be explained by telling the story of the building of one particular canoe, but the method is narrative even if we say, not "I stripped the bark from a birch tree," etc., but "To build a birch-bark canoe, the Indian strips the bark from a birch tree," etc. The latter is generalized narration. In the extreme of the diagram method, one simply makes a blue print and inscribes upon it the dimensions and specifications as to material, with a few directions as to details of the work. But the method approaches to that of the diagram, when by process of excluding all save the very essential details and giving these details swiftly one seeks to convey to the imagination of the reader almost in a flash a mental picture of the whole thing. The art of flashing upon the retina of the inward eye a fundatal image of something which is to be described or explained can be taught to the pupil in composition. In teaching the pupil thus to resort to the imitation of narration or of drawing or photography, the teacher is cultivating valuable habits of reflection and analysis. If he can develop such habits, there is a good hope that his pupils will be sufficiently interested in composition to increase their vocabularies, improve the flexibility of their sentences, and master methods of paragraph-formation. Seek first the mastery of thought, and all these things shall be added unto you.

THE NOTEBOOK SYSTEM OF THEME CORRECTING*

By Stith Thompson, Ph. D., Instructor in English,
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Most teachers of English composition in high schools and colleges will agree that the primary purpose of such a course is the teaching of accuracy of expression. For the exceptional student, to be sure, the finer shades of style may be taught with profit, and for all students a certain amount of time may well be spent in striving simply to provoke thought. But four-fifths of the energy of the teacher of composition in the high school and in the Freshman class at college must be given to an attempt to get his students to write correctly and accurately. No one who has not taught these classes can imagine the crudeness in expression of the students who come into them. Even the students with real talent often need much drill before they can write without technical errors; and for the great majority it is necessary that the teacher spend his time and energy in the attempt to teach the simplest fundamentals of composition. If, when he has finished his work, the members of his class can all spell correctly, punctuate accurately, use good grammar and diction and a correct and expressive sentence structure, he can feel that his work as a teacher of elementary composition has been well done. If he be a real teacher, he will have stirred up thought among his students and will have helped them in countless other ways toward a true grasp of style; but he will not, in any event, have neglected to teach them the one great lesson of accuracy.

This cardinal principle is, I suppose, very generally admitted among teachers of composition. But even so simple a task as the teaching of accuracy is by no means easy. Certainly a good percentage of the students in these courses fail to do their work satisfastorily, and the teachers are seldom contented with their own efforts. The facts taught in a course in composition are few enough; the maxims could be set down in a page. But at the end of the session there are always a large number of students who

*Reprinted from the *English Journal* for January, 1917.

have not made the improvement in their work that they should have made in a month. Anyone can learn to spell if he puts his mind to it, and the same thing is true of punctuation, and diction, and grammar, and sentence-structure. These principles are reducible to a rather exact science, and every student of ordinary intelligence *can* get them. I really believe that no more than 2 per cent of the students in composition courses would fail if they could be made to put their best efforts into the task of mastering the cardinal principles of composition.

The whole center of the trouble seems to me to lie in the fact that although a teacher may spend fifteen minutes in the marking of the errors on a theme, the student in too many cases fails to look beyond the general comment or the grade, and rarely examines into the nature of his individual errors. It used to be a common experience of mine that students came to me for a conference on themes when they had really never examined the corrected themes before coming into the room. Even if they had done so and had corrected some of the errors in the margin, it was always easier to say, "I didn't know what to do with that sentence," than to take the trouble to correct it. If the student makes an honest effort to correct a sentence and fails, it is, of course, the real purpose of the conference to meet this difficulty. My experience, however, has been that, unless I have some definite method of dealing with this question, all my poorer students shirk the correcting of themes. In many cases I tried the re-writing of themes, but I found three objections to this method of procedure: The student would dodge the issue by writing sentences that evaded the difficulties in question, and the second theme frequently brought up new errors that were quite as bad as those in the first. Moreover, the reading of these themes doubled my work.

Within the last year and a half I have been making special efforts, with the help of some of my colleagues in the University of Texas, to solve this problem of making the student really correct his errors. We have worked out what we all believe has proved to be a very satisfactory method. It has brought about the result that the students are forced to correct all the mistakes marked on their themes, and to correct them in such a way that they can tell at a glance in what branch of composition their most frequent

errors are occurring. Moreover, it has made the work of the conferences concrete and much more helpful to the student than it had been before. The purpose of the present paper is to explain this method so that other teachers who have experienced the troubles I mention may have the opportunity of trying it for themselves.

We have the student divide a notebook into five parts, as follows: (1) spelling and capitalization, (2) punctuation and form, (3) grammar, (4) diction, (5) sentence-structure. These parts he separates with a heavy sheet of some kind, on which he pastes an index flap so that he can turn to any particular division of the notebook without delay. The pages of the book he rules down the center, and places at the head of the left-hand column the word "Error" and at the head of the right hand column the word "Correction." The books are then ready to receive the corrections from the themes that are handed back to the students.

Next, we arrange the symbols for the correction of themes as nearly as may be under these five heads, so that the student will have no doubt as to where to enter his corrections. Mistakes involving the re-writing of whole paragraphs or a radical change in the whole theme are not usually entered in the book; for these cases nothing short of a complete re-writing will suffice. It is for the correction of those smaller errors that constitute nine-tenths of the young student's difficulties with English that the notebook is provided. When he has the symbols classified, he is ready to correct any theme that is given back to him. Taking the theme, he will enter the mistakes of sentence-structure, diction, grammar, punctuation, or spelling in the section of the notebook devoted to those errors. In the columns marked "Error" he will first record the date of the theme and then the sentence in which the mistake has occurred. He should leave the mistake uncorrected and should underscore it. Directly opposite he will correct the sentence in the column marked "Correction." In case the error has not been an obvious one and the student has been compelled to look the matter up in a handbook, he will record the section of the handbook in which the mistake is discussed.

The general scheme of the notebook page will be seen from the following example:

DICTION

Error	Correction
January 15	§ 225
He tried in vain to convince the *balance* of the students.	He tried in vain to convince the *rest* of the students.
January 22	§ 219
My brother and *myself* consider this my best photograph.	My brother and *I* consider this my best photograph.

In practically all cases we have insisted that the entire incorrect sentence be copied, except in the case of spelling. Here only the word is needed. It is obvious that it is not necessary to record a whole sentence in order to show all errors of grammar or punctuation, but unless a student can discriminate it is well enough to have him write the entire sentence, lest he make it so fragmentary as to lose the whole point of the correction. We do not hesitate, of course, to tell students of discretion that they need copy only so much of a sentence as will illustrate the nature of the error. Such students are, however, very rare in proportion to those who must follow the letter of the law.

That is really all there is to the system. The student records the actual mistakes he has made, and corrects them in a place in which all the mistakes of a similar kind are kept. If he has few mistakes, he has little to record in the notebook. He is saved the useless labor of re-writing the parts of the theme in which there are no errors. He has all his mistakes of punctuation or diction together, where he may see them and may see the same error showing itself often enough to persuade him to master the principle he is so frequently violating.

The difficulties we feared when we first considered the trial of the notebook were not borne out by our experience. We feared that the students would shirk and not put all their corrections into the book, but we have found it very easy to check them. We have them bring their themes as well as their notebooks to the conference, and, taking some page from a theme, we ask them to show us in the notebook how certain things have been corrected.

There can be no possible excuse for not having the sentence entered at least on the "Error" side of the column, and if a sentence is found that is not entered at all, the student is given "Failure" on his notebook. This point is well understood among students, and if the teacher insists, they will keep their notebooks faithfully. Out of sixty-five at my last conference, only one had a notebook that was not reasonably satisfactory.

We were also afraid that, even though it would no doubt make the students' work more accurate and the instruction more concrete, it would nevertheless take more time in the conference than the old system of talking over the themes without notebooks. We have found, on the contrary, that along with the increase in concreteness there has come a definiteness of purpose in the conference that really makes the work lighter. The student brings his notebook and we look over the "Correction" side of the ledger to see if there are still any errors and if the student has really caught the point of the correction. Sentences that he has been unable to correct will be entered on the "Error" side and will be left blank on the right hand side. Most of the attention of the teacher at the conference can be devoted directly to the clearing up of these points that the student has been unable to correct. Usually, if he takes the trouble to write the sentence on one side, he will go ahead and make a real effort to correct the sentence, so that he has, as a rule, done his best before he comes to the conference. If the student seems to have shirked, he may be checked up in the manner already mentioned. Finally, a general glance over the notebook will serve to show the teacher and the student what it is that the student must work on. The conference thus becomes very concrete, and is likely to have much more definite results than one in which no classification of errors has been made.

As a means of review the notebook has shown itself to have distinct advantages. A student can now tell you definitely, "My trouble is with diction. I have had fifteen mistakes of diction, and only three of sentence-structure and four of punctuation. I have had no corrections to make in the spelling and grammar sections." When a student realizes just what his weakness is, his study for examination as well as his regular work assumes a

definiteness that keeps him from floundering around. He knows exactly where he must apply his best efforts.

All of us who have used the notebook system are now so wedded to it that we should find the teaching of composition difficult without it. We feel that with it we have been able to solve in large measure the very troublesome problem of accuracy in writing, for we do not find the students persisting in the same errors to the degree that they did before they made use of the notebooks. We have felt that the saving of time and energy and the increased efficiency of the teaching are so great that we should like to see the plan tried by our colleagues in other colleges and schools. It is not, of course, a panacea, but it does make the teaching of composition more concrete and effective than any other method we have been able to find.

BETTER SPEECH CAMPAIGNS*

By Kate Fullinwider, Teacher of English in the Palestine High School

The need of speech improvement is everywhere apparent. Despite the vigilance of teachers in the English department, supplemented by the watchfulness of teachers in all other departments, careless, incorrect speech is still prevalent among our students. And why is this true? The question does not suggest one of the deep and unsolvable mysteries of our pedagogical life. There are some, alas! who charge this condition to the inefficiency of the English department. The results obtained by teachers of English are meager enough, to be sure, but even a slight advance against great odds is commendable.

The forces arrayed against those who champion the cause of better speech are formidable, and well nigh unsubduable. Ignorance has been mentioned by George Eliot as one of the three things that cannot be hid. It is true that there is nothing else so apparent, nothing else that so successfully eludes the art of camouflage, as a person's ignorance of the language he attempts to speak. What a student does not know about English is in everybody's ear, and in everybody's eye. He cannot open his mouth to speak, he cannot set his pen to paper, without producing convincing evidence as to his attainments in the use of his language. For this reason the English department is accorded its full measure of criticism. There are teachers, but not in the Palestine High School, who, as a pleasurable pastime, have "set in a notebook, learned, and conned by rote" all the deficiencies of the English department; when it is quite true that if students were called upon to show the same working knowledge of the subjects taught by these teachers that they are required to have of English, it would be discovered that there is a greater equality between the various departments than had been suspected. Undoubtedly the unsympathetic criticism that has been made of the English teacher has greatly hindered his efficiency.

*A paper read before the English Section of the Texas State Teachers' Association at Waco, November 29, 1917.

Again, the influence of the English department is matched against that of the uncultured home where parents, who have been able to make themselves understood, cannot see any further use to which language need be put. As a man once said to me, "You grammar teachers are mighty proud about your nouns and verbs, but I couldn't ha' earned a penny more if I ha' knowed ever rule in your book." I did not argue the point with him, but I was of the opinion that the rules might have been of some service to him even in his world where there is nothing to earn but pennies. We find always that speech improvement is foolishness to the careless and a stumbling block to the ignorant.

Nor does the student himself go unscathed. In every department of his school his English is criticized. When he attempts to venture a little into the business world, he is condemned and turned aside because his English is poor. He is often able to cover over his lack of information in regard to other subjects, or he may be able to push aside his need of such information until he has had time to repair his lack. In the case of his English, he has the double burden of learning it and using it too. Neither of these can be postponed. He seems beset by criticism on every side. This insistence upon better English discourages the student and sometimes makes him sore, sometimes disgusted and resentful. Criticism there must be; but it should be wise, sympathetic, and opportune. To keep the student in heart in the midst of it is another delicate task for the teacher.

But we need not enumerate the drawbacks to the English department.

We had labored against all of these hindrances in Palestine in our attempt to teach our students to speak English—not "high-brow" English, but just the plain, everyday kind, grammatically respectable. We had tried to teach them through example; we had given them abundant drill in reading; we had used hook, and we had used crook; but our time-consuming and painstaking labor had found little reward. There were but two teachers in the English department. We had frequent conferences; we inquired into our ability to teach; we looked into our methods; we grew anxious lest the secret of speech improvement had eluded us; we scorned delights and lived labor-

ious days, devoting ourselves to a futile effort to effect a speech reform in our high school. We were trying for the fourth unit of credit in English. The inspector from the University came, and inspected. Before leaving, he told us that the work observed in the English classes was good, but that he would not recommend us for additional credit because of careless speech on the part of our students. What I could have done to that inspector would have been more becoming in the German department than in the English. But the inspector made his escape, and went his way. We sent our papers to Austin, and in due time came the decision that we were not eligible for the fourth unit. It was then that we fell upon the thorns of life and bled. We English teachers held no more conferences; in fact, I think we rather avoided each other. It seemed for a time as if everything were over; but we worked doggedly on to the end of the year, which was very much like several other years that had preceded it.

In September, through the pages of the *English Journal,* we got the idea of the speech campaign; and it came to us like a ray of sunshine upon a prison wall. Here I must give honor to whom honor is due, to Miss Claudia Crumpton, of Montevallo, Alabama. In the *Journal* of September, 1916, Miss Crumpton very briefly told of the observance of Better Speech Week at Montevallo. Brief as her account was, it was sufficient to give us the suggestion. It seemed as if a message of the extremity we were in had been taken by telepathic means to Miss Crumpton, and that she had sent us an answer in substantial "black and white." We enlarged the idea of Better Speech Week into a plan for a three weeks' Better Speech Campaign, and felt that we had a boon worth half our realm.

Inter-departmental sympathy and interest are not virtues too rare to be found in the Palestine High School. Teachers of all departments entered into the campaign with commendable enthusiasm, and without their support the campaign could not have been conducted to a sucessful issue.

During the three weeks of the campaign, the English work was emphasized as much as was possible. On the board in each class room each morning was placed an exercise the pur-

pose of which was to corect some error of speech common among the students. The following are two of the exercises used:

(1) "Like" is a vulgarism when used to introduce a subject with a verb. Say "as" or "as if."

"Like" is correct when followed by a noun without a verb.

Vulgar: He acted like the rest did.

Right: He acted as the rest did.

Right: He acted like the rest.

Vulgar: I felt like I had done something generous.

Right: I felt as if I had done something generous.

Right: I felt like a philanthropist.

(2) "Everybody," "anybody," "each," "either," "neither" are singular number and common gender. When they are used as antecedents, the singular pronouns "he," "his," "him" are used, and may be regarded as common gender also.

1. Everybody has his (not their) faults.
2. If anybody wishes to go, he (not they) may.
3. Each of us must live his (not their) own life.

Some notice of every exercise was taken by each teacher in each class, so that by the end of the day all the exercises were pretty well "rubbed in" on the student. If he violated the rule suggested in the exercise, it was at his peril; for everybody was asked to bring in a report of the mistakes he had heard, and these reports were placed upon the board together with the names of the offenders. In this matter of reporting mistakes, the student was to be no respecter of persons; the speech of teachers as well as of students was under criticism. A spirit of competition soon arose among the students, each one attempting to secure the longest list of solecisms and to keep his own name off any other student's report.

The last week of the campaign, which we designated as Better Speech Week, was a time of most intense interest. The students were thoroughly awake and keenly on the watch for any improprieties of speech. Features of the week were spelling contests, pronouncing contests, oral reading contests, and addresses on speech improvement by prominent citizens. A very attractive feature of the week was the display of a large number of posters, each suggesting in some way the idea of speech improvement.

The culminating event of the week was a street parade; and to Palestine, so far as I know, goes the credit of being the first town in Texas to present a pageant for creating a sentiment for better American speech.

Leading the parade were two boys, one carrying an American flag, and the other a white flag, on which were the words "American Speech." Following came Mr. Good English, who carried a banner bearing the words "Better Speech." Next came Mr. Bad English, ragged and dirty, tied with a rope, and led by two boys carrying a banner on which was inscribed "Mr. Bad English Must Go." Two boys impersonating the Gold Dust Twins followed, carrying a banner with the inscription, "Let the English Gold Dust Twins Do Your Work." A girl dressed as the Old Dutch Cleanser woman came next, carrying can, cloth, and stick. By her side walked a boy whose banner read "Old Dutch Cleanser Chases Ain't." One boy carried a large picture of President Wilson under which were the words, "Our Model for Modern English Prose."

One of the most attractive features was a group of girls dressed to represent the sources of American speech. In the group were Greek, Roman, Spanish, Italian, and Old English characterizations.

A number of the paraders carried illuminations bearing suggestive mottoes such as the following: "France has taken the lead in speech improvement. Why can't we excel what France has done?" "The French speak their language best; why can't we speak our language best?" "The man who can express himself well can demand what he will."

Following these and other features of the parade came a number of automobiles draped with the American colors and bearing appropriate mottoes.

And what were the results of the campaign? For the first time our students as a body considered the matter of speech improvement seriously. For the first time our citizens realized the sincere, downright effort we were making for speech improvement. The enthusiasm reached the ward schools, and some of them conducted minor campaigns. Beyond the ward schools, the interest spread through the town; and people who long ago had forgotten the difference between good and bad habits of

speech were looking up old grammars and rhetorics, and bringing dictionaries from their dusty shelves to be put into use again. Pronunciation and the choice of words were under discussion everywhere. "How do you pronounce this word, or that word?" was a question to be heard at every turn. Every day students brought in questions as to pronunciation and propriety of expression which had come up in their homes or among their friends. A number of former high-school students called me over the telephone to ask some question that had been suggested by the campaign. Undoubtedly there was a genuine awakening in regard to habits of speech.

But was it an evanescent interest? Did the enthusiasm last? you ask. When the high-pressure methods were discontinued, of course the interest became less. But teachers in other departments say that students in their classes show today a correctness of grammatical expression, a care in the choice of words, and a habit of consulting the dictionary that are distinctly above what they showed at this time last year.

Personally the campaign was a stimulating experience to me. I believe all the teachers who went through the campaign will give the same testimony.

In the second week of the campaign, we received our annual visit from the inspector. He observed our method of campaign, and seemed impressed. A few weeks later the fourth unit of credit in English was granted us.

Altogether the results of the campaign in Palestine were highly satisfactory, and I am convinced that the Better Speech Campaign is the thing to catch the grammatical conscience of the school and of the town.

A STORY WITH A MORAL

In June, 1905, John Doe and Richard Roe graduated from the same high school. Each got a first-grade certificate and began to teach in the rural schools of the State in the fall of 1905.

John Doe's Career

1. Taught two years at fifty dollars a month.
2. Attended summer normals and got a permanent certificate.
3. Taught five years as principal of a village school at from sixty to ninety dollars a month.
4. Taught five years as superintendent of village schools, at an average salary of one thousand dollars a year.
5. Is now thirty years old and finds competition with college-trained teachers making it increasingly hard for him to secure advancement of any sort.

Richard Roe's Career

1. Taught two years at fifty dollars a month.
2. Attended University of Texas Summer School 1906-10.
3. Taught during this time at from seventy-five to one hundred dollars a month.
4. Spent 1910-12 at the University of Texas.
5. Finished his degree work by summers and correspondence, 1912-15, while superintendent at fifteen hundred dollars a year.
6. Took his B. A. in 1915.
7. Superintendent, 1915-16, at two thousand dollars a year; 1916-17, at twenty-four hundred; elected for term of 1918 at twenty-five hundred dollars.
8. Finds calls coming to him and positions opening without any solicitation.

Which of these two is more useful to the community in which he lives? Which career will you choose?

The University of Texas summer session runs this year June 12 to August 31. Two complete terms of equal length. Regular University work. One registration fee of five dollars entitles you to attend one or both terms.

Summer Normal during the first term.

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